Todd on New Birds from Colombia and Bolivia.[1]— 'The Auk' has on several occasions felt compelled to take exception to the wholly inadequate diagnoses which some authors issue as the basis for new names. From the letters received from many prominent ornithologists we are assured that our stand is endorsed by the great majority of those who have the advancement of ornithology at heart. We regret exceedingly to have to revert to the matter again, but in a recent paper by Mr. Todd, we find new names proposed without adequate descriptions some of which have already proved stumbling blocks to others, working in the same field, the progress of ornithology being thus hindered instead of advanced.

These diagnoses are styled "preliminary," but both author and publishers know that a name must stand upon the original description, that is the one to which our reference leads us, and in the majority of cases we do not know whether supplementary diagnoses have appeared or not, and even if they have we are compelled in involved cases to rely upon the original diagnosis alone, additional information given subsequently may refer to the original species or it may not.

Why — and we ask in all seriousness — cannot all who are engaged in systematic work realize, as most of them do, that they are under a serious obligation to their fellow workers in making their descriptions as clear and definite as they possibly can, supplying measurements and comparisons with all related forms, so as to make the consultation of types a last resort instead of, as it often is, the only method of determining what a writer is naming?

It is we think high time that all ornithologists realize the seriousness of the work in which they are engaged or they will become the laughing stock of other systematists. In the volume of the 'Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington' in which this paper appears there are new species of mammals, birds, reptiles, ophiurans, fossil insects, mollusks, etc. all well described. Why cannot the journal insist upon the same standard for all the diagnoses which appear on its pages? Some time ago there was a general agreement among American scientific publications that they would publish no new genera unless types were designated by the authors. If a similar stand were taken with regard to new species by refusing to publish "preliminary" or inadequate diagnoses systematic ornithology would be greatly benefited. If neither authors nor editors will realize the seriousness of this matter there will ere long be a call to revise the Code of Nomenclature so that the citation of a type specimen will not save a wholly inadequate description from the unidentifiable category.

The new names proposed by Mr. Todd in this paper are as follows: From Bolivar, Colombia: *Phœnicothraupis rubiginosus* (p. 3) Turbaco; *Myiobius modestus suffusus* (p. 4) Turbaco; *Attila caniceps* (p. 4) Jaraquiel; *Xiphocolaptes procerus rostratus* (p. 5) Jaraquiel; *Phœochroa cuvierii notia*

[1] Preliminary Diagnoses of Apparently New Birds from Colombia and Bolivia. By W. E. Clyde Todd. Proc. Biol. Soc. of Washington, Vol. 30, pp. 3–6. January 22, 1917.

(p. 5) Turbaco; *Celeus innotatus* (p. 5) Jaraquiel; *Bubo virginianus elutus* (p. 6) Lorica; *Pyrrhura subandina* (p. 6) Jaraquiel; *Eupsychortyx decoratus* (p. 6) Calamar; from Santa Marta, Colombia: *Ostinops decumanus melanterus* (p. 3) Las Vegas; *Icterus mesomelas carrikeri* (p. 4) Fundacion; *Eupsychortyx cristatus littoralis* (p. 6) Mamotoco; from Bolivia: *Ostinops sincipitalis australis* (p. 3) Buenavista; *Attila neoxenus* (p. 4) Rio Yapacani; *Microrhopias melanogastris iliaca* (p. 5) Rio Pilcomayo; *Xiphocolaptes obsoletus* (p. 5) Rio Yapacani. *X. major obscurus* is also proposed (p. 6) as a substitute for *X. m. saturatus* Cherrie preoccupied.— W. S.

Grinnell on the Evening Grosbeak.[1]— Just at the time when the eastern race of this erratic bird is attracting attention through the New England and Middle States, by a southward migration of unprecedented extent, Dr. Grinnell gives us the results of a prolonged study of the relationship of the western birds which he considers are divisible into four geographic races instead of two, as given in Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America.' No matter how many races we may decide to recognize we must agree with Dr. Grinnell's contention that the type of *Hesperiphona vespertina montana* was definitely fixed on the plate which accompanies the original description in 'The History of North American Birds,' and that this name belongs to the Mexican bird; Chapman's *H. v. mexicana* becoming a pure synonym. Furthermore Dr. Grinnell finds that birds from the mountains of extreme southern Arizona agree with the Mexican race rather than with that of the Rocky Mountains, which brings this southern form into the limits of the A. O. U. Check-List.

The birds from farther north — representing '*montana*' of the Check-List — he divides into three races: *H. v. brooksi* (p. 20), from British Columbia, type locality, Okanagan; *H. v. californica* (p. 20), from the Sierra Nevada of California north into Oregon, type locality, Crane Flat, Mariposa Co., Cal., and *H. v. warreni* (p. 210), southern Rocky Mountains from Colorado to northern Arizona, type locality, Colorado Springs.— W. S.

Brooks' 'Game Birds of West Virginia'.[2]— Nearly half of the fourth 'Biennial Report of the Forest, Game and Fish Warden of West Virginia' is devoted to an account of the game birds by Mr. E. A. Brooks, consulting ornithologist to the warden. The eight chapters of this excellent report cover the subjects of forest conditions as related to game birds; hunting game birds; economic value of game birds; propagation; protection; and description of the game birds of the State.

---

[1] The Subspecies of *Hesperiphona vespertina*. By Joseph Grinnell. The Condor, Vol. XIX, January, 1917, pp. 17–22.

[2] The Game Birds of West Virginia. By Earle A. Brooks. Fourth Biennial Report of the Forest, Game, and Fish Warden of West Virginia. 1915–1916. July 1, 1916. pp. 93–160.